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EDITORIAL PAGE

Trouble in the Pentagon

Dr. James A. Perkins of the Carnegie Corporation, who had been in the Pentagon and is regarded as an expert in military affairs, says that the Pentagon suffers from inertia and lacks initiative.

This is, in a manner, to have been expected. We are not, as a nation, accustomed to the existence of a peace-time armed force of such dimensions as we now require nor are we accustomed to a continuous war such as we have had since 1945.

The adjustment from what this country was before 1917, to what we have become since 1939 would be difficult for any people. Americans find it particularly hard. Nevertheless, we must sooner or later recognize the fact that we purchased a mean, nasty, relentless enemy who takes advantage of every situation to do us mischief.

This is a world-wide attempt to humiliate the United States and this country is neither ready nor knowledgeable in techniques to meet the situation. What has happened in Cuba during the past year provides ample evidence that we lack the flexibility, the swiftness of thought and action to meet unexpected situations.

Dr. Perkins says:

"... the point needs to be made that the existing machinery did not seem to bring to the surface in the right way the changed circumstance of the Russian threat to American systems."

The long suppressed Gaither Report apparently warned our government as to what was to be expected. Why was the Gaither Report suppressed? Was it because it produced data which the Administration did not want Congress or the people to have? If so, has the Pentagon used the Gaither Report as a guide, anyhow, or has it been lost in the mountain of documents which are filed, but forgotten?



HOOVER

The country has many knowledgeable men, experts in all fields, competent and wise men. Why are not more of them used in an emergency situation such as we now face? Woodrow Wilson mobilized the brains of the nation for World War I and Franklin D. Roosevelt, to a degree, followed his policy.

Dr. Perkins made the point:

"I think if we were to make a general judgment about the National Security Council, it is that the President has not received from the normal NSC routine the kind of sharp debate, the clear difference of opinion, the new ideas that would require major modifications of program."

The President needs "no" men. The nation needs dissenters who will make our policy-makers re-think our policies in the face of actual facts. Surely the State Department requires plenty of re-thinking, in view of the errors since John Foster Dulles died.

On the other hand, it is impossible not to note that the business of government continues despite the errors that are made on top.

J. Edgar Hoover will celebrate his 36th anniversary as director of the FBI. This is a record of continuous, useful and consistent service in one of the most difficult operations of our government. It is interesting to see that the FBI had developed a reputation for being the most efficient in Latin America.

When the CIA was organized, the FBI was limited to functions within the United States and the CIA outside the United States. It is hard to believe that his organization would have been an error as the ill-fated U-2 flight over Russia.

It is easy to criticize those who face hard tasks. We have no desire to do so in such an occupation. But the situation is serious and good counsel is needed.

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